



Senator Patricia Miller

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News from the Indiana State Senate

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Indianapolis, IN 46204

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(317)232-9400
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Commission Studies Methods To Replace Property Tax

Reducing the property tax burden is a top priority with me. Therefore, during the 2004 Legislative session, I authored a proposal to create the Property Tax Replacement Commission. The proposal was amended into another bill and received approval from both houses of the legislature. That committee is meeting this summer.

The commission must study the effects of eliminating 50 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent of net property tax levies.

As you know, 99 percent of all property taxes are raised by and spent by local units of government such as cities, towns, counties, townships, libraries and schools. One major hurdle for the commission is to identify rev-

enue sources capable of replacing property taxes and still provide sufficient revenue to maintain essential local government services.

"We want a better system," and "Do no harm," were the sentiments echoed in the Property Tax Replacement Study Commission, which has met several times at the Statehouse since its creation.

The commission will submit status reports to the Legislative Council, which is the administrative body of the General Assembly, in September. All members of the panel hope to create a more equitable and fair method of funding local government.

Stay Informed

View meeting minutes and notices at
<http://www.in.gov/legislative/interim/committee/ptrc.html>

Code Adam Program: Another Tool for Missing Children

The success of the Amber Alert program in Indiana has legislators looking at additional ways to expand emergency alert programs designed to find missing children. One of these programs is called the Code Adam program, named in memory of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, who was abducted from a Florida shopping mall and murdered in 1981. Since its creation in 1994, the Adam Alert has been a powerful, preventive tool against child abductions and lost children in more than 45,000 establishments across the nation.

When a customer reports a missing child to an employee, an alert with a brief description of the child is announced over the building's public-address system. All designated employees search for the child and monitor exits to help prevent the child from leaving the establishment. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the local police department is contacted for assistance, and if nec-

essary, an Amber Alert is issued.

This is one more step that can be taken to ensure a child's safety. Several states have enacted legislation to establish a protocol in state buildings and encourage retail stores to adopt this program. According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Code Adam alerts are issued in federal and state office buildings, museums, libraries, amusement parks and hospitals around the nation. Expanding the program in other facilities will help protect children further.

Hoosiers should be pleased with the success of the national and state-wide Amber Alert programs. Code Adam is another resource in the fight to keep our children safe. For more information, including how a business can start the Code Adam program, please contact NCMEC at (703)274-3900 or visit www.missingkids.com.

Get Involved!

..... How you can communicate with me and members of the Indiana General Assembly

Voting is one very important way to make sure your views and concerns are being represented in government, but there are many other ways you can get involved in making our state a better place to live.

Write letters: Join other constituents in sending e-mails and letters with messages conveying you interest in a particular bill or issue.

Attend Interim Study committees: During the interim, state legislators and local leaders meet publicly in study committees and commissions to discuss a variety of topics. The public is invited to testify or to take this opportunity to hear discussions of interest. You can find the calendar of meetings online at: www.in.gov/legislative/interim/calendar. The calendar is updated regularly.

Attend Standing Committees: The legislative session allows the opportunity for citizens to come to the Statehouse and listen to proposed legislation and provide public testimony. Find information online at: www.in.gov/legislative/session/calendars or call me at (317)232-9400 or 1-800-382-9467.

Visit web sites: The General Assembly and all state agencies have web sites that are available with information on a variety of topics and the person to contact if you want more information. The General Assembly site has an area dedicated to committee meetings, legislative surveys and links to email your senator. Go to www.in.gov/legislative, www.in.gov/S32 or www.in.gov/senate_republicans.

Organize or attend local events: Many local communities have a variety of organizations dedicated to furthering a cause or improving the lives of its citizens. A great way to stay involved and give back is to attend functions sponsored by these groups. If you feel that an area needs representation, form an organization and work together to further your cause.

If you do not have Internet access at home, you may visit the computer station at your public library. You may also call my office at (317)232-9400 or 1-800-382-9467. Send letters to my attention at Indiana Senate, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Senator Miller was present for 100% of Senate roll call votes in the 2004 legislative session.

Consumer Information

Unclaimed Property

The Attorney General reports thousands of unclaimed property listings all across the state of Indiana. Some possible sources of unclaimed property are: credit balances, old savings and checking accounts, unpaid wages, mutual fund shares, insurance proceeds, uncashed traveler's checks, and utility deposits.

You can contact the Indiana Attorney General's office to see if you or a relative has a claim. Visit www.indianaunclaimed.com or call, toll-free, **1-866-IN-CLAIM** (1-866-462-5246).

Unwanted Faxes

Contact the Federal Communications Commission to report any unsolicited faxes. You can file a formal complaint at www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html or call, toll-free, **1-888-225-5322**.

Direct Mail Lists

Tired of receiving advertising through the mail? Remove your name from direct mail lists by visiting

www.dmaconsumers.org or write to:

Mail Preference Service
Attn: Dept 12851374
Direct Marketing Association
PO Box 282
Carmel, NY 10512

National No-Call List

Indiana led the way with the creation of a no-call registry. Federal legislators followed suit by creating a national do not call list. Consumers now can list both home and mobile phone numbers in order to prevent unsolicited telemarketing calls. To register your phone number on the national list, visit www.donotcall.gov or call, toll-free, **1-888-382-1222**. Additions to the list are updated every three months.



Keeping Our Air Clean

"Today is a Kno-Zone Action Day." We've all heard this sentence on the radio or on television. But what exactly does it mean? Why is it better to carpool when traveling or to mow the lawn in the evening on Kno-Zone Action Days? For that matter, what exactly constitutes one of these days? On average, Indianapolis and other cities may have between 10 to 15 Kno-Zone Action Days a year. But why?

Ozone is a colorless and odorless gas that is found within the air we breathe. There is also the ozone layer, which exists above the Earth's surface. The ozone layer screens out the harmful UV rays before it reaches the Earth.

The ozone that is harmful is found near the surface of the Earth and is called ground-level ozone. This can decrease our air quality and can result in smog and damage to the environment around us. It can also be damaging to our health; affecting the throat and lungs.

The Environmental Protection Agency evaluated the ozone levels in every county in the United States. In order to reduce ozone, the EPA released standards for counties to meet. Those that did not meet the standards were labeled as "non-attain-

ment" areas. The Central Indiana counties designated as non-attainment were as follows: Marion, Johnson, Hancock, Hamilton, Hendricks, Boone, Morgan, Shelby, Madison and Delaware Counties.

In recent years, ground-level ozone has become a major problem in Central Indiana. The volatile organic compounds that are found in ozone chemically react when the weather is extremely hot or in the presence of sunlight. As the sun's rays become more intense, more ground-level ozone is formed.

It is for this reason we have Kno-Zone Action Days. The only way to lower ozone levels

is to minimize the amount of emissions we release into the air from activities like driving our cars, filling up our gas tanks or running lawnmowers.

For more information on Kno-Zone Action Days or other air quality issues, please visit www.knozone.com, call the Indianapolis Department of Public Works at (317)327-4AIR or (317)327-4247, or the Johnson County Health Department at (317)736-3770.

There are many ways in which we can keep the air in Central Indiana cleaner and safer. Some ways to consider are:

- Limit engine idle
- Carpool with friends, family or co-workers or ride the bus
- Wait until after 6 p.m. to fill your gas tank or mow your lawn
- Walk or ride your bicycle short distances
- Reduce the number of car trips by combining errand



Senators Study Variety of Topics In Summer Committee Meetings

Miller serves on five legislative panels during interim

Although the 2004 session of the Indiana General Assembly adjourned in March, legislative work continues this summer for members of the House and Senate.

I serve as the Chair of the Indiana Commission on Excellence in Health Care, Vice-chair of the Health Finance Commission, and as a member of the Legislative Council, the Select Joint Commission on Medicaid Oversight, and the FSSA Evaluation Committee.

As a member of the **Select Joint Commission on Medicaid Oversight**, I study and propose procedures that could help reduce costs and address Medicaid services and claims.

Similarly, the **FSSA Evaluation Committee** is studying the efficiency and structure of the department of Family Social Services Administration charged with the management and implementation of family and social issues of the state.

As a member of the **Health Finance Commission**, I discuss issues that include the delivery, payment and organization of health care services. Additional topics assigned to the committee include generic drug pricing variances, the viability of county hospitals, and a moratorium or certificate of need requirements for construction of health facilities.

In an effort to improve the quality of life for Hoosiers, the **Indiana Commission on Excellence in Health Care** is studying the quality of health care, including mental health, and a comprehensive statewide strategy for improving the health care delivery system.

I continue to serve on the **Legislative Council**. The council serves as the bipartisan, bicameral body established to oversee the administrative affairs of the General Assembly when the legislature is not in session.

New Census Survey to Provide Communities with Critical Information

Since 1790, a census has been conducted in the United States every 10 years. It measures population but also gives critical information to businesses, policymakers and citizens on a variety of issues. The census numbers determine federal funding for states, cities, towns, schools, roads and even senior citizen centers. It informs our state and local officials when planning for housing, development and social services.

In the previous census years, most households received a "short form" census survey with seven questions, while one household in six received a "long form" with 46 more detailed questions. Beginning in 2010, all households in the U.S. will receive only the short form, which solely counts the population.

Information on the long form will be gathered by the American Community Survey, a division of the U.S. Census Bureau. Starting later this year through the end of the decade, smaller portions of information will be collected. The American Community Survey will provide updated social, economic and housing information for local communities every year instead of once every 10 years.

Our communities can change radically in a short period of time. The new census method is intended to better reflect these changes.

For More Information

Visit the American Community Survey's web site at

www.census.gov/acs/www



SNAPSHOT: Senator Miller answers a phone call from a constituent. Senators value citizen input both during and in between legislative sessions.

While the fast pace of session ended in March, senators still have a lot of work to do during the summer and fall months, also known as the interim.

Legislators serve on study committees to examine issues in greater detail that were not addressed during the regular session of the General Assembly

The Indiana Senate Page Program

The General Assembly offers students an important learning opportunity at the Statehouse.

Any student from 6th grade to 12th grade can sign up to serve as a page for a day. Students will be excused from school for the day.

Pages spend a day in the Senate assisting their local legislators. Responsibilities include responding to senators' requests, delivering messages and running errands. The day includes a tour of the Statehouse and observation of a session, if one is in progress.

Those interested in serving as a page should send their name, age, address, phone number and school affiliation to my office. The Page Office will begin accepting requests in November.